



## APPROVED MINUTES

### **BOARD OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 10, 2019**

The Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections met in Regular Session on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., in Assembly Hall of the The Government Center Building, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

**Presiding:** Ms. Mary Carole Cooney, Chairperson

**Other Board Members Present:** Mr. Aaron Johnson, Vice-Chairperson  
Mr. Mark Wingate  
Ms. Vernetta K. Nuriddin  
Mr. David Burge

**Staff Attending:** Mr. Richard Barron, Director; Mr. Ralph Jones, Registration Chief; Mrs. Pamela Coman, Registration Manager; Ms. Brenda McCloud, Administrative Manager; Mr. Johnny Harris, Elections Officer; Ms. Breauana Jenkins, Administrative Specialist; Mr. David Lowman, Staff Attorney; Ms. Cheryl Ringer, Senior Attorney; Jessica Corbitt, PIO & Director of External Affairs; April Majors, Public Affairs Manager

**Guests Attending:** Foris Webb III (City of Atlanta), Shea Roberts, Aileen Nakamura, Saya Abney, Roderick Parker (National Federation of the Blind), Marcia Robinson (National Federation of the Blind), Jasmine Campbell (Department of External Affairs), Rosalind Zee, Stacey Hopkins, Sally Fitzgerald (League of Woman Voters), Stacey Hopkins, Wandrea Moss (Voter Registration), Shamira Marshall (Voter Registration)

#### **#1– APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to amend the agenda to add City of Atlanta’s request for contract agreement to item # 6. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

#### **#2– COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RESPONSE**

**Aileen Nakamura** complaints of polling tape at several locations not being visible or posted per policy and procedures.

**Shea Roberts** expressed concerns of voting integrity and referenced a reporter who was able to visit an early voting location and record with no interference.

**Saya Abney** expressed her concerns about Absentee by mail processes during the December 2018 Runoff Election

**Rosalind Zee** expressed concerns of voters being disenfranchised, poor poll worker training, poor poll worker recruitment, and provisional ballot procedures

**Foris Webb III** expressed his appreciation to the BRE for accommodating the City of Atlanta. Mr. Webb also wanted to thank **Mr. Dwight Brower** (Retired Elections Chief) publicly for his many years of dedicated service

### **#3– REMOVAL OF NAMES FROM VOTER LIST DUE TO FELONY CONVICTIONS**

**Ms. Coman** presented the January Felon Report to the Board that was transmitted by the State and recommended the removal of 1136 names. Letters were mailed and two individuals responded. There were two revisions, Mr. Walter Thomas Cobb and Ms. Natasha Simmons presented documentation in order to restore their voting rights.

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to remove 1136 names from the electors' rolls as listed on Exhibits A, B, C, D and E, on the January 10, 2019 Felon Report but to retain the names of Mr. Walter Thomas Cobb and Ms. Natasha Simmons. The motion was made by Mr. Burge, seconded by Ms. Nuriddin to retain Mr. Walter Thomas Cobb and Ms. Natasha Simmons on the electors' rolls and to remove 1136 names, and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **#4– APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **Special Meeting – December 4, 2018**
- **Special Meeting- December 10, 2018**
- **Regular Meeting – December 13, 2018**
- **Executive Session Meeting – December 13, 2018**

**A motion to approve all the meeting minutes from the Regular, Special, and Executive Session Meetings in the month of December 2018 was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Burge and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

### **#5– MONTHLY OPERATIONS REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2018**

**Mr. Barron** highlighted Voter Registration numbers, personnel, election, and administrative related issues:

- 18,487 voter registration applications received in November
- The total number of voter registration applications received in 2018 – 340,931
- As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, **768,800** (704,592 active and 64,208 inactive) registered voters reside in Fulton County
- A legal hold remains on the DRE voting units from the April 18, 2017 and June 20, 2017 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional Special Election and Runoff Special Election
- Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) have been completed and submitted to Municipalities for the Special Election in March 2019
  - City of Atlanta
  - City of Hapeville
- **Mr. Dwight Brower** retired on January 8, 2019 as the Elections Chief of the Elections Division

- Loch Lomond residents will be moved back to the City of South Fulton
- According to the proposed budget **DRE** will receive two more permanent positions added to Voter Registration Division

**Mr. Barron** responded to public comment and a letter to the editor inquiring about the length of time that Absentee Ballots are taking to reach their destination. **Mr. Barron** stated that absentee ballots once mailed within the County take about five to eight days for delivery.

**Ms. Nuriddin** inquired about the length of time need for a ballot request to be processed

**Mr. Barron** stated that the Department is required to complete the request within forty-eight hours

**Ms. Nuriddin** inquired about an internal tracking system

**Mr. Barron** expressed that it is difficult during Runoff Elections due to time restraints, recounts, and major holidays

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about the out of state absentee ballots and the length of time it takes for processing

**Mr. Barron** stated there is no mechanism in place that will document the length of time it takes for out of state ballots to arrive; however, the Voter Registration Division was able to estimate the in state time due to inquiries regarding the date voters would receive their ballots.

**Mr. Wingate** inquired about the working relationship with United States Postal Service (**USPS**) for tracking ballots.

**Mr. Barron** stated that there would be a significant increase in cost to track ballots

**Mr. Johnson** described an unfavorable occurrence with USPS mailing system and inquired about using another mailing system

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that the cost would be doubled in comparison to what is currently paid and during a Presidential Election, that price would be astronomical

**Mr. Wingate** suggested tracking to the prospective address to ensure delivery of Absentee Ballots

**Mr. Burge** informed the public and the **BRE** that the voter can opt to use a different mailing system for returning their Absentee Ballot; however, the voter will be incurring that cost not the **DRE**

**Ms. Nuriddin** requested clarity regarding issues related to absentee ballots, as well as a remedy to solve the issues

**Mr. Barron** mentioned that the **DRE** and USPS have a great working relationship and the USPS understands the priority that Absentee Ballots have in the **DRE**

**Chairperson Cooney** mentioned the letter to the editor by Lee Wilder regarding gaining insight on Absentee Ballots and the length of time it takes for an absentee ballot to be received

**Chairperson Cooney** inquired about the Rocket File upgrade

**Mr. Jones** stated that this is the imaging system that the Voter Registration Division uses to scan and store documents. He stated that the upgrade has been installed, and is working properly.

**Chairperson Cooney** inquired about Mr. Barron's visit to the Secretary of State's office

**Mr. Barron** stated he did not make it to the **S.A.F.E** (Secure, Accessible, & Fair Elections) Commission meeting; however, he sent an email to express his concerns

**Mr. Barron** stated the SAFE Commission intends to recommend a concept not a vendor at the meeting

**Mr. Burge** asked when the legislature will vote, implement, and allocate funds to purchase new voting equipment, especially with 2020 being a major Election year

**Mr. Barron** stated he is unsure of when implementation will take place, but is aware that the State has not submitted a Request For Proposal (**RFP**) for the voting equipment that will be chosen

**Ms. Nuriddin** requested a response from the **DRE** regarding public comment that mentioned polling tapes missing from several locations in District 2

**Mr. Barron** stated that if a polling tape is missing, it may have been removed by a previous voter

**Ms. Nuriddin** informed the **DRE** and **BRE** that before joining the board she would visit polls to ensure all policy and procedures were adhered to, including polling tape being displayed once polls closed

**Ms. Nuriddin** requested the **DRE** provide clarity to this procedural discrepancy

**Mr. Harris** mentioned that poll workers are informed of this procedure and based on visibility; the polling tape may be on the inside or outside of the door; however, the tape must be displayed

## **#6- APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AGREEMENT TO CONDUCT SPECIAL ELECTION ON MARCH 19, 2019 AND GENERAL SPECIAL RUNOFF ELECTION ON APRIL 16, 2019**

- City of Hapeville
- City of Atlanta

**Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that the contracts follow the same template; these contracts are the standard intergovernmental agreement with their ordinances included. **Mr. Barron** informed the **BRE** that both municipalities have opted not to have Early Voting for their Special Elections.

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to approve the contracts for the General Special Election on March 19, 2019 and General Special Runoff Election on April 16, 2019. The motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wingate and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **#7- COUNTY INSURANCE COVERAGE**

**Ms. Ringer** informed the **BRE** that the Risk Manager informed the County Attorney's office that the County has procured coverage of various boards throughout the County. This provides added protection for board members in their individual capacity. **Ms. Ringer** stated that most boards rely on Sovereign and Official Immunity, this coverage does include monetary damages; although, most of this Board's judgements are writ of mandamus, declaratory judgements or injunctions. **Ms. Ringer** stated she was ensuring the board was aware and received a copy of this added coverage

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to close regular session and convene into executive session to discuss pending litigation and Annual Evaluation. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

After executive session, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to resume into regular session. The motion was made by Mr. Wingate, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other items requiring the Board's action, **Chairperson Cooney entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Burge moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.** Collectively, the Board agreed to adjourn at 11:27 a.m.

The meeting adjourned.

Prepared by,

Mariska Bodison, Board Secretary